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SIPDIS

PACOM FOR JIACG/CT, JIATF-WEST; ALSO FOR FPA

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SUBJECT: MARCH 1 "RMSI" MARITIME SECURITY WORKSHOP: MAKING  
PROGRESS WITH THE LITTORAL STATES

REF: STATE 38874

Classified By: EP Counselor Laurent Charbonnet, Reasons 1.4(b)(d)

1. (C) Summary: On March 1, the USG hosted an informal workshop on the five "RMSI" elements of maritime security for Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. The meeting marked the first time the United States has met exclusively with the Malacca Strait littorals on maritime security. The re-worked title "regional maritime security cooperation" seemed quite acceptable to all participants. The USG inter-agency team gave presentations on: enhancing coordination and information sharing both at the inter-agency level and internationally to improve Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA); the JIATF Intelligence Fusion Center concept; establishing maritime authorities and responsive decision-making architecture; and potential legal models for international information sharing and operational cooperation. Malaysia expressed interest in further discussions on maritime security, particularly on technology to improve MDA; Indonesia expressed interest in further discussions on the fusion center concept and on decision-making architecture and models for coordinating the maritime security missions of a range of domestic agencies. Malaysian and Indonesian reactions suggest that the next steps in the "RMSI" process should be bilateral efforts with Indonesia and Malaysia respectively. Thereafter, a focus on the need for empowering legal arrangements between the three littoral states will require a return to a multilateral format. End Summary.

2. (U) On March 1 in Singapore, the USG hosted an informal workshop on the elements of maritime security for Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. A representative from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) also attended. The workshop took place on the eve of the ASEAN Regional Forum Confidence Building Measure (CBM) conference on Maritime Security co-hosted by Singapore and the United States from March 2-4.

Cooperative Maritime Security: the USCG Experience

3. (U) Vice Admiral Harvey Johnson led off the morning with a presentation on the U.S. Coast Guard's cooperative approach to maritime security. The Coast Guard has stepped up cooperation with other U.S. federal, state and local agencies post 9/11. Enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) has been instrumental in raising effectiveness.

4. (U) Participants highlighted differences between the U.S. experience and the situation in the Malacca Strait. Singapore's MinDef Policy Director Col. Gary Ang pointed out that the users of the Strait of Malacca were mostly non-littoral states. Since user states needed to play a part, he suggested, perhaps handling maritime security under the auspices of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) would be the most effective way to proceed. EAP Maritime Security Coordinator Richard deVillafraanca responded that, while user states certainly had an interest in maritime security policy in the region, at the end of the day it would be the littoral states that would do the brunt of the actual work. Another factor to consider would be the length of time it would take to move policy through the ARF. The Malaysian delegation noted the need to address the socio-cultural roots of maritime crime. Malaysian Admiral Abdul Rahim Hussin advised that a comprehensive solution required removing the motivation for crime by promoting economic development and pointed to Malaysia's experience in defeating its communist insurgency in the 1940's and 1950's as an example.

U.S. Maritime Security Policy: the Interagency Process

5. (U) PM/ISO Senior Naval Advisor CAPT. Bruce Nichols' presentation on the interagency process covered the recently concluded experience of U.S. agencies in working together to create and implement a new National Security Policy Directive (NSPD) to coordinate maritime security policy post-9/11. He highlighted the importance of top-down leadership to keep participating agencies on track. Also important was the need for agencies to "take a step back" to educate themselves on the organization and functions of their partners, to

understand the scope and limitations of statutory authorities within the interagency participants and to delegate drafting to a smaller core group.

16. (U) Singapore's Col. Ang cautioned that it was impractical to wait for the littoral states to complete their own interagency reorganizations before moving forward with regional cooperation. Rather than wait, he suggested that countries needed to use existing relationships. Malaysia's Admiral Abdul Hadi (Director of Malaysia's "MECC" or Maritime Enforcement Coordination Center) drew attention to his country's own experience with reorganization in establishing its MECC and in ongoing efforts to establish the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), which he termed "a sort of Coast Guard" to enforce maritime security. Indonesia's Damos Dumoli Agusman (MFA) advised that his country was also currently pursuing interagency reorganization; he noted that while 9/11 had given U.S. agencies a common definition of the threat and a motive to stay focused, Indonesia's government agencies had so far run into problems in these areas.

#### Interagency Communication: the Fusion Center Concept

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17. (U) Joint Interagency Task Force West (JIATF-West) LTC Mike Creed discussed the necessary elements for interagency coordination by reviewing JIATF-West's efforts to combat narcotics trafficking. Standardization and broad access to information were essential to promote interoperability among agencies and countries. This leads to a "Common Operating Picture" and the fusion concept, where data can be turned into actionable intelligence and used against specific targets. Equally important, there must be an equal partnership among agencies, which is fostered by well-defined MOU's.

18. (U) A Malaysian representative stressed the difficulty of getting agencies to share information. CAPT. Roger Welch, PACOM JIACG/CT Director, responded that one solution to this problem would be to ensure that all agencies be given credit for arrests and seizures so each has an incentive to cooperate rather than compete. Singapore's Col. Ang questioned whether the fusion center concept could be replicated in the Malacca Strait without first resolving larger political issues, due to different levels of information sharing among countries and the fact that most of the Strait were national territory. Richard deVillafranca agreed on the need for an effective information sharing agreement between the three Malacca Strait littorals; he noted the 2002 agreement on information sharing between Indonesia, Malaysia and three other ASEAN members, but also noted Singapore was not yet a signatory. This agreement might become the basis for an initial effort at information sharing among the littorals. On the operational front, he noted that the coordinated patrols between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore could be a first step toward better information sharing, since enhanced information exchange could improve the efficient use of scarce maritime assets.

#### The Legal Dimension: International Agreements

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19. (U) The fourth session, presented by L/OES Attorney-Adviser CAPT. Ashley Roach, focused on the role that bilateral and regional agreements play in establishing a successful framework for regional maritime security. For agreements to be effective, states must offer the fullest law enforcement cooperation possible in accordance with their national laws and on the basis of respect for sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit. Because terrorists and maritime criminals do not respect national boundaries and often exploit jurisdictional "gaps and seams," international cooperation, supported by strong bilateral and regional agreements, is a crucial means of enhancing capability to suppress illicit activity at sea.

110. (U) Reactions to the idea of creating new legal structures for maritime security cooperation varied from delegation to delegation. Singapore's Col. Ang was generally supportive but cautioned that too great an emphasis on legal formalities could potentially impede commerce and cooperation; Ang argued for a balanced approach of looking at what existing agreements had to offer and making adjustments as necessary. The Malaysian delegation was more cautious, emphasizing the importance of maintaining absolute sovereignty no matter what form regional cooperation might take. Roach advised that these were perfectly natural concerns that the United States had encountered frequently as it had built cooperative relationships with countries in the Western Hemisphere; he advised that as mutual comfort levels increased, countries invariably tended to shed their initial reluctance to allow neighbors to play a greater role in combating common maritime threats.

#### Table Top Exercise: Caribbean Region Model

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¶11. (U) Brigadier General (Ret) Thomas Flemming from PACOM described the Caribbean Regional Agreement (CRA) to demonstrate how countries could collectively build greater situational awareness to combat transnational threats. While the focus of the CRA was narcotics, several aspects of it might be applicable to the Strait of Malacca. For example, the CRA had a Cooperating Nation Information Exchange System that provided a common operating picture with real-time electronic communications. Respecting national sovereignty, each state could determine how much information it shared.

¶12. (U) A Malaysian participant emphasized concern for environmental protections and improved aids to navigation instead of a disproportionate emphasis on terrorist threats. Singapore's Col. Ang observed that the three littoral states already cooperated on air traffic control, with over-lapping radar coverage and a system where controllers could communicate in real time. There was also some discussion of existing bilateral and trilateral mechanisms to enhance maritime security in the Strait. CAPT. Welch closed by stressing the need to inventory existing assets, agreements, and capabilities to identify gaps in coverage and areas where capacity building could be done with greatest effect.

#### Afternoon Wrap-up Session

¶13. (U) Singapore's Col. Ang again emphasized the importance of involving user states in maritime security policy and of having an external body such as the ARF or IMO play a role. Ang also offered that a holistic approach to maritime security should also include consequence management -- the cooperative measures that countries would take after an event had occurred. He advised that working on consequence management would involve fewer political obstacles than cooperating on prevention and might be a way to institutionalize the regional maritime security dialogue.

¶14. (U) In response to the IMO representative's intervention on the serious regional and global economic consequences of a terrorist incident in the Malacca Strait, the Malaysian MFA's Wan Napsiah Salleh cautioned that "extreme examples" of possible terrorist activity or rampant piracy in the Strait of Malacca amounted to saying that her government was not doing enough. She advised that Malaysia was aware of the need to "be vigilant," but it would have to carefully study the ideas presented during the workshop before deciding whether they were suitable for Malaysia. The Indonesian delegation's reaction was more muted. DEPLU's Damos Dumoli Agusman was appreciative of U.S. efforts and expressed interest in further discussions.

#### Comment

¶15. (C) It was a considerable achievement to bring together diplomatic, military and law enforcement representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand to discuss maritime security. It is an indication that the maritime security debate has shifted over the last six months. While preserving national sovereignty remains sensitive, the discussions focused more on organizational and operational issues. The next steps on our maritime security strategy for the Strait of Malacca should include following up on the interest Malaysia and Indonesia expressed in the use of technology to enhance MDA and Indonesia's desire to learn more about the inter-agency process that led to the Presidential Directive on Maritime Security Policy. Malaysian and Indonesian reactions suggest that the next steps in the "RMSI" process should be bilateral efforts with Indonesia and Malaysia respectively. Thereafter, a focus on the need for empowering legal arrangements between the three littoral states will require a return to a multilateral format.

¶16. (C) Comment, continued: After the March 1 discussions, Maritime Coordinator deVillafranca briefed Japan Coast Guard (Iwanami and Sakurai) and Chinese MFA (Counselor Zhao Jianhua) in broad terms about the objective and outcomes of the workshop. The Chinese reaction, in particular, suggests a lessening of suspicion and concern about USG engagement with the Malacca Strait littorals on maritime security, a notable development given that 80 percent of China's oil imports transit the Strait. On Japan, despite goodwill and common strategic and operation objectives, we continue to grapple for a way to coordinate our respective maritime efforts in the Malacca Strait.

¶17. (U) This message has been cleared by EAP Maritime Coordinator Richard deVillafranca.

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